Challenger Deep
Andy Schmidt

Issue #3
22 pages

21 August 2008
1st Draft

Page 1

Panel 1
Interior hallway of the sub (45 degree angle still in effect). Water is about calf deep here. They're all cold, D'Angelo most of all. Red emergency lights are illuminated.

Speers is leading the pack down the hall towards a hatch (which we don't need to see here) with Moore and D'Angelo right behind him and visible. I suggest Speers in the foreground (right) so he's largest and most prominent. The line stretching back (and left on the panel) behind him. Speers has a flashlight.

Please arrange the three most prominent characters from left to right—D'Angleo, Moore, and then Speers on the right for proper reading order. Thanks.

D'Angelo: FFFFFFVVVVVVVV.

D'Angelo: C-C-Can't think str-r-r-aight… What'sss happen-ing t-t-t-to us?

Moore: Fuck, D'Angelo, I don't know! We're on a sunk sub a thousand feet below crush depth with sub-zero water pouring in and a short supply of oxygen. What the fuck do you THINK IS—

Speers: Knock it off!

Sppers: Okay. Roll call! Whose still with me!

Caption: Time to detonation: 00:19:39.

Panel 2
Tight on Speers. Tailess balloons surround him as the others all go through the roll call. He's not paying attention, it's just to give them something to do while he looks around at the damage.

Moore: Moore!

D'Angelo: D'A-A-Angelo!

Holden: Holden! If you care, you ungrateful bastard.

Panel 3
Medium shot of Speers shining the flash light straight at the ceiling, which, of course, is 45 degrees from where he's standing. He's found the hatch and it looks intact.

Speers: Alright, people. We're here.

Moore: The middle of the h-h-hall?

Speers: Just because you're cold doesn't mean you get to be a smart ass, Moore.

Moore: Sorry, sir.

Speers: This hatch is our best chance of getting out of here.

Panel 4
Same shot as panel 3 only everyone's face drops. This is weird.

Speers: It's intact and fully operational. If we can get the deep sea suits over here we might be able to make it—

SFX: WHUMP!

Page 2

Panel 1
Tight on Holden.

Holden: That's not good.

Moore: Uh, yeah. Any ideas what that was?

Panel 2
Speers climbs up into the hatch.

Speers: Yeah, let's find out…

Panel 3
Tight on Speers in the hatch, looking out the window. Squinting.

Speers: I'm not sure what I see…

Speers: Looks like…

Panel 4
Outside of the hatch now looking back at it. We can see the whole hatch and Speer's face through the window. Off to one side of the panel, the sub is lit up (by Chase's flashlights, but we don't see that yet).

Speers: …light. I think I see light!

Panel 5
And the camera pans towards the light to reveal a hand resting on the deck. Inside the hatch Speers and the others start yelling for help.

Speers: I think somebody's out there!

Page 3

Panel 1
Splash panel as we reveal the hatch next to Chase's unconscious body lying on the hull. From this angle we should still (hopefully) be able to make out Speer's face even though he can't see Chase yet.

Everyone: Help us!

We're in here!

Bring some firewood!

Caption: Time to detonation: 00:17:11.

Panel 2
Long inset panel toward bottom of the page. We can see the group huddled around the hatch ladder as Speers is climbing down into our view. He should still be above them.

Speers: It's not moving. The light isn't moving.

Moore: What does that mean?

Speers: Let me think…

Panel 3
Inset panel just beneath panel 2, half the width of panel 2. Same shot as panel 2 (just cropped in tighter).

Speers: Supplies. It's got to be supplies.

D'Angelo: W-W-What k-kind of su-u-u-uplies?

Speers: Only one way to find out…

Panel 4
Inset panel half the width of panel 2, to the right of panel 3 (see how we made a nice small box at the bottom of the page?). Extreme Close Up on Speers.

Speers: …We're bringing him in.

<u>Page 4</u>

Panel 1
Establishing shot of the boat topside. Word balloons are free-floating in panic. Maybe burst balloons?

Sotomayor: Get him back, Brown! Get him back!

Brown: Chase!? Come in, Chase!

Christina: We can't lose him!

Morgan: Everyone, quiet! Relax!

Christina: Relax? We're going to die because of—

Morgan: Shut up!

Panel 2
Inside the cabin, establishing our cast—Brown at the communication console, Morgan standing above him telling everyone to be quiet, and Christina, Sotomayor, and Varley all in full on panic mode.

Morgan: Stay calm. Let's think this through.

Morgan: Soto, start suiting up. You're going in the drink.

Morgan: Varley, you got any machine that can swim him down?

Morgan: Christina, what's Chase's body going through right now?

Panel 3
On Soto, exiting.

Soto: On it. I owe it to him to get down there.

Panel 4
Close on Varley.

Varley: Nothing I've got can get Soto down there fast enough. Nothing on Earth can do that.

Morgan (off panel): Work something up. We've got to get him down there.

Panel 5
Close on Christina.

Christina: Chase is probably going into shock. At that depth—that preasure—what else could be happening to him?

Christna: Well, he could have frozen to death, I guess.

Brown: Jesus, lady!

Panel 6
Close on Brown, sickened by Christina's callous attitude.

Brown: You are on heartless bitch.

Morgan: Ease down, Lieutenant.

Panel 7
Tight on Morgan's eyes.

Morgan: Everyone get to work. I'm joining Soto. We're diving in five.

Page 5

Panel 1
We're in a dream sequence but the audience should think it's just a flashback. So use that same flashback technique from issues 1 and 2 for this whole sequence, please. Liz and her two compatriots are in the deep sea vessel that we know eventually sinks, killing them. Liz is on communications and one of the other two guys is looking out the window.

Liz: Are you reading me, Eric?

Eric (radio balloon): Loud and clear, babe.

Panel 2
Tight on Liz's face. She has a look of wonder and awe on it as she looks through the window. Her hand pressed against the window, trying to touch the glowing life outside.

Liz: You need to see this, baby. I don't know how to describe it.

Liz: It's… wonderful.

Liz: There's more life down here than we ever thought possible.

Panel 3
Eric, Morgan and Soto are all on the surface in the boat. Morgan is checking depth while Chase is talking into the radio. Remember, this is a flashback, so Chase and co should have their younger look going on.

Chase: Take a picture, Liz. But don't worry, I'll be down there with you soon enough.

Liz (radio balloon): You're going to die when you see—

SFX: CHUUNG!

SFX: (radio) SQWAAK-ZZT-KKKR

Panel 4
Tight on Chase's horrified face as he grabs the microphone.

Chase: Liz! What was that? What's happening?

Morgan: The cable! Something's wrong with the cable.

Chase: Come in, Liz!

Panel 5
Chase sits back when he hears Liz's voice.

Liz (radio balloon): SKAWWK—ill here, baby. Eric? Do you hear me?

Chase: I hear you. Jesus, honey. You okay?

Liz: We will be. We just need you to come in and get us?

Chase: What? You mean pull you up?

Page 6

Panel 1
Chase jumps back knocking the chair over behind him, Soto moving out of the way. Chase is shocked.

Liz (radio balloon): No. I need you to jump in the drink and swim down here and get me.

Liz: We're dying, Eric, and it's your responsibility to save us.

Chase: That's impossible. I can't swim down there. You're dillusional.

Panel 2
Morgan holds Chase steady. Chase is quicvering.

Morgan: Ease down, Eric.

Liz (radio balloon): Eric, listen to me. This is your expedition—your vessel—your doing. When we die, it's on you.

Liz: Don't you think you should at least try to come and get us?

Chase: I-I-I-

Panel 3
And now Liz gets nasty.

Liz (radio balloon): Or did I choose the wrong man?

Chase: Don't do this, Liz. Not now. You're not alone.

Liz: Is Morgan there?

Chase: Liz?

Liz: He'd come and save me, Eric. Why won't you?

Panel 4
Eric runs from the cabin onto the deck, sprinting. Crazy-eyed.

Liz (radio balloon): Come get me, Eric.

Liz: We're waiting for you.

Liz: We want to come home.

Panel 5
And Chase has jumped over the edge of the boat and is diving head first into the black ocean.

Chase: Liiiiiiiiiiiiii—

Page 7

Panel 1
Extreme close up on Chase. We're in the present at the bottom of the ocean, inside Chases's helmet as he shocks himself awake—eyes wide, mouth open, yelling.

Chase: --iiiiiizzzz!

Panel 2
Pull back so we see him in the situation. Chase is looking around, getting his bearings.

Chase: …

Chase: Jesus, Liz.

Panel 3
Chase is getting up now, on top of the sub.

Chase: I'm up, baby. I'm up.

Chase: Next time, you don't have to go there, you know.

Chase: Don't think I don't appreciate the help.

Panel 4
Chase turns on the brightest flashlight ever as he looks down the length of the sub.

Panel 5
And Chase points the flash light down to the side. We can't see what he's looking at.

Chase: Aw, hell.

<u>**Pages 8 and 9**</u>
Double page spread. Top two thirds are a panoramic view with the bottom third consisting of four more panels.

Panel 1
Now we see what Chase sees. The sub is sitting right on the edge of the Challenger Deep cliff. Barely stable. If a penny drops on the wrong side of this thing the whole boat is going over. Chase's light is shinning passed the sub and deep into the crevice. This is the only chance we're going to get to establish visually how deep that trench is and the danger on it.

Probably, you'll want to "shoot" this from down in the deep, looking up at the sub. If you do, we'll have to cheat on the lighting to show the sub on the edge. Or you can frame it from high over Chase's shoulder looking down, again cheating on the lighting to get a sense of the expanse of the trench. Whichever works for you, Chee. You've been kicking butt on this so far, so up to you.

Chase: The Challenger Deep.

Chase: I'm close, Liz. I'm really close now.

Chase: I've just got to find your brother on this sub first…

Panel 2
Medium shot of Chase as he moves back to the latch.

Chase: …and then I'm coming for you.

Panel 3
Interior of the sub. Our principles are here. They're stopped at a closed door.

Moore: So this is the end of the line?

D'Angelo: L-Looks that way. Ffft.

Panel 4
Speers has his hand up against the door. Pensive.

Speers: We open this chamber and there's no going back. We'll take on water and in a matter of hours, likely freeze to death.

Holden: Don't look so grim. We're going to die in a few minutes anyway.

Speers: I've had it with you, "Captain."

Panel 5
And Speers spins around to find himself face to face with Holden's side arm.

Speers: You're out of your—

Holden: Ah-ah, Commander.

<u>Page 10</u>

Panel 1
Long shot of the room. Everyone's frozen as no one saw this coming.

Holden: Everyone stay calm. I don't intend to hurt anyone.

Holden: Not even you, Speers.

Panel 2
D'Angelo checks his side where the gun used to be.

D'Angelo: How'd you--?

D'Angelo: Crap. I'm s-s-sorry, guys.

Panel 3
Speers with the gun in his face.

Speers: Okay, Captain. Look, if you don't let us go, we're all going to die when those bombs go off.

Speers: Or we can get word to the guy outside and maybe deactivate the bombs or get out of here.

Panel 4
Extreme close up on Holden, deadly serious.

Holden: What makes you think I want to prevent detonation?

Caption: Time to detonation: 00:11:12.

<u>Page 11</u>

Panel 1
Exterior of the sub. We're looking up as Chase leaps over the wall of the sub, he's going to come down on top of us in a few seconds, but for now, he's in a cool action jump pose.

Panel 2
Chase twists around so he's facing back towards the direction he just came (and the wall of the sub). He's aiming his light towards the sub. We can see a lot of mud and dirt. And we can see dents and cracks.

Panel 3
He falls further catching a ripped open edge. There's a hole in the ship large enough for him to slip into if he wants. He's hanging from the piece of jagged metal.

Panel 4
Long shot as Chase points the light away from him down the length of the sub. The important thing to note here is that all the missile silo caps are here. This is it. He's found the missile bay which means he's close to the failsafe control.

Caption: Time to detonation: 00:09:00.

<u>Page 12</u>

Panel 1
Back up top. Establishing shot of the ship.

Brown: Message coming through!

Panel 2
Brown at the communications console, standing up, yelling, excited.

Brown: Chase is back on the horn! He's transmitting!

Panel 3
Christina comes running in with Varley right behind, both excited.

Christina: You've got to be kidding me!

Christina: He should be dead.

Brown: Message reads: "TIME. SHORT…

Panel 4
Extreme close up on Brown, looking down, gloomy.

Brown: … SUB. BOOM. GET. CLEAR."

Panel 5
Varley is excited to hear his invention works and Christina is disgusted with him.

Varley: You hear that? My little bambino got him all the way to the sub.

Christina: Did you hear a different message, Varley?

Christina: The world is about to end and you're please about your little swimming robot?

Panel 6
Tight on Varley, shrugging her comment off.

Varley: Silver lining, me dear.

<u>Page 13</u>

Panel 1
On the deck. Soto and Morgan are in the suits and getting ready to dive. Helmets off.

Morgan: You ready, Soto?

Soto: What's it matter? We either die up here waiting or we die a salt water death below.

Morgan: We're not dead yet.

Panel 2
Brown comes out of command on the deck above, yelling to Morgan and Soto. They're sealing their helmets on.

Brown: We dead!

Brown: Just heard from Chase. He's not going to make it. Those missiles are going to blow!

Panel 3
Same as panel 2. Morgan and Soto look at each other.

Soto: Like you said, Morgan…

Panel 4
Largest panel on page. Soto is jumping of the ship in a hero shot.

Soto: …we're not dead yet!

Page 14

Panel 1
Holden has separated himself from the others. He's corralling them to move back from where they came.

Holden: Okay, we're going back to control.

Moore: D'Angelo will freeze to death if we do that. Why do we have to go back there? What difference will it make?

Panel 2
Holden gets angry at Moore and yells at him. He's angry that this kid doesn't understand duty. Meanwhile, in the foreground and behind Holden, Speers calmly removes his missile key from around his neck.

Holden: I've had it with you, Moore! Our job is not to do what is easiest!

Holden: You took an oath! We all did!

Holden: And we are going to keep our word…

Panel 3
Speers hands his missile key to D'Angelo calmly and under the radar. D'Angelo doesn't really understand why yet.

Holden: …even if I have to kill you to do it.

Panel 4
Close on D'Angelo. He looks quizzically at Speers.

Panel 5
Speers looks back. No words are exchanged.

Holden (off panel): Okay, D'Angelo. Speers. You too.

<u>Page 15</u>

Panel 1
Interior of the sub. Chase is coming in through the giant cash that he was holding onto a moment ago.

Panel 2
Close up on Chase as he looks and shines the light up.

Panel 3
Largest panel on the page. We see what Chase sees, huge round missile silos shooting at 45 degree angle up like some sort of monster forest of metallic redwoods.

Chase: Jesus in Heaven.

Panel 4
Chase comes to a metal box that for convenience sake is labeled FAILSAFE with a DANGER symbol on it.

Caption: Time to detonation: 00:05:33.

Page 16

Panel 1
Back to Speers and Holden. Long shot as everyone is out the door except Holden and Speers. Holden is helping Speers due to his wounded leg.

Holden: I'm sorry, Speers. I really am.

Speers: That's great. Happy to hear it.

Holden: I'm doing this for the safety of the world. We don't blow up these missiles, then they fall into enemy hands.

Holden: We have to die so that others will live.

Panel 2
Close up on Speers looking up at Holden, still leaning on Holden. The important thing to note here is that they're very close to the door and Speers is slapping Holden on the chest, near his shirt collar. We should see the chain for the missile key around Holden's neck.

Speers: Jeez, Captain, you're all heart!

Panel 3
And Speers rips the missile key off of Holden's neck.

Holden: What are you--?

Speers: Shut up!

SFX: T-CHNK

Panel 4
Holden tosses the key through the door to D'Angelo. One hand tossing the key, the other gripping the door as he's about to shut it. If we see him, Holden would be leveling his gun at Speers, but that's not necessary to show.

Speers: Destroy these keys!

D'Angelo: Y-Yes, sir!

Holden: You miserable piece of--

Panel 5
Speers slams the door shut, locking him and Holden inside the room alone.

SFX: WHAM!

SFX: CHA-THUNK!

Page 17

Panel 1
Holden and Speers alone. They're several feet apart. Holden is standing as close to upright as you can in this slanted submarine. He's looking calmer than Speers whose heart is pounding and leg is broken.

Holden: You locked the door.

Speers: That's right.

Holden: Why? After I shoot you, I'm just going to unlock it.

Panel 2
Angle on Speers. Behind him, through the circular window we can see the others moving away from the door.

Speers: We'll see.

Panel 3
Speers dives into the water as Holden fires, hitting Speers in the arm.

SFX: BLAM

Panel 4
And Holden goes down shooting into the water but not knowing exactly where Speers is.

SFX: BLAM BLAM BLAM

Holden: Whuff—

Caption: Time to detonation: 00:04:19.

<u>Page 18</u>

Panel 1
We're medium shot on Chase as he's opened up the case that says FAILSAFE on it.

Chase: Okay, okay…

Panel 2
He's looking at a key pad, just the numbers like a telephone. The digital readout says:

ENTER DEACTIVATION CODE.
WARHEAD DETONATION IN 00:03:55.

Chase: Remember, remember…

Panel 3
Stat of panel 2.

Panel 4
Chase curses as he forgets.

Chase: SHIT!

Panel 5
Then he remembers—delighted.

Chase: Wait! There it is!

Chase: I'm gettin' old…

Chase: …knees ache, pissin' in the middle of the night, memory's going…

Panel 6
Inset panel. Chase's hand begins entering the code.

Chase: I nearly ended the world there.

Page 19

Panel 1
Back to the room with Holden and Speers. We're look at the room and they're both under water so it seems calm.

Panel 2
Holden busts out of the surface.

Holden: Huwhuu--

Panel 3
Long shot. In the back ground Holden is at the door about to unlock it when he sees in the extreme foreground, Speers popping up with a pipe in his hands—a heavy one.

Holden: Aren't you dead yet?

Panel 4
Speers, Holding the pipe like a Catholic Nun school teacher holds a ruler. We can clearly see a window behind him.

Speers: you know how far beneath crush depth we are?

Speers: A flounder could probably crack our hull open if it hit the right spot.

Holden: What are you saying?

Speers: I just wonder what this pipe will do to that window?

Panel 5
Extreme close up on Speer's eyes as they narrow.

Holden (off panel): You won't. It'd kill us both.

Caption: Time to detonation: 00:01:01.

<u>Page 20</u>

Panel 1
Close up on the digital read out in the failsafe box. It reads:

FAILSAFE ABORTED. TIMER RESET: 12:00:00.

Panel 2
Chase stares at it blankly.

Chase: Oh, man. I did it.

Chase: I feel…

Panel 3
And Chase lurches forward vomiting in his helmet. We can see it splatter on the inside of his helmet lid. It's gross.

Chase: hhwwwhuuukkk!

SFX: SPLATCH.

Panel 4
Pull way out. Show the whole room but make sure Chase is still right in front of the box.

SFX HUGE: BOOM!

Panel 5
And the whole place moves violently! Chase is thrown into the failsafe box.

SFX HUGE: WHOOM!

SFX (Chase hitting box): SLAM

<u>Page 21</u>

Panel 1
Exterior shot of the whole sub. We can see now that it is rolling and it's aft end is swinging out over the edge of the cliff, above Challenger Deep.

Panel 2
It swings further out over the edge.

Panel 3
And the aft end teeters the whole sub so it's almost standing upright as it begins to slide down the cliff.

Panel 4
It comes to an abrupt stop on the cliff wall as a piece of rock is jetting out from the wall and the aft end lands on it.

Page 22

Panel 1
Cut back to inside. Moore and D'Angelo are together. Moore is holding D'Angelo who is nearly unconscious.

Moore: Frank! Frank, don't you die on me!

Panel 2
The Engineer from issue 1, Pollet and his three people are alive in engineering. The guy who was up in the rafters in the first issue is hurt.

Pollet: And that's the crap, people!

Chip: Commander, I think I've COUGH—broken a couple ribs.

Pollet: Hennessey, grab Chip. Take care of him.

Panel 3
Close up on Hennessey. This is the man Chase has come for.

Hennessey: Aye, sir.

Pollet (off panel): I don't want any of us dying alone…

Panel 4
Now we're on Chase. We're angled behind the failsafe box so we can't see what it says, but we can see him straining to reach the box. It's like he's reaching right for us.

Chase: No. No. No. This can't be happening.

Chase: Damn wall's bent in.

Chase: Can't reach…

Panel 5
And we reverse angle, we can see past his hand, it's reaching for the failsafe key pad, but he might as well be a mile away. The readout now says:

DETONATION REACTIVATED.
WARHEAD DETONATION IN 12:59:44.

To be continued…